

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,174,091 to Herrmann, and claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Herrmann in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,401,585 to Morgan. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Herrmann does not teach or suggest an optical connector including, *inter alia*, a housing having a cord receiving hole portion in which an optical fiber cord can be inserted and received along an axis of the optical fiber cord, and a stopper including a plate-like portion having a positioning slit, wherein a mounting hole, through which the plate-like portion of the stopper can be inserted into the cord receiving hole portion in a direction perpendicular to a direction of insertion of the optical fiber cord, is formed in the housing, and the housing has stopper retaining portions for holding the plate-like portion of the stopper, the stopper retaining portions engaging a retaining side of the plate-like portion having a cross-section perpendicular to the direction of insertion of the optical fiber cord, and wherein when the stopper is inserted into the cord receiving hole portion, each of blade portions, formed by a side edge of the positioning slit and a distal end edge of the plate-like portion disposed perpendicular to the side edge, penetrates into a covering portion of the optical fiber in a direction different from a direction toward an axis of the optical fiber cord, while forcing a portion of the covering portion away, as recited in claim 1.

Instead, Herrmann discloses a fiber optic connector having a fiber holding clip 10 inserted into a connector housing 2 through an opening 9. The clip 10 includes a first limb 11 with chamfered limbs to pierce an insulating sheath 7 protecting an optical waveguide 8 of an fiber optic cable 6, and a second limb 13 with two parts each having a latching hook 14 that engages the housing 2 at a latching lug 16 along an interface that is parallel to the direction of fiber optic cable insertion. See col. 2, lines 40-60, col. 3, lines 11-16 and Figs. 2-5 of Herrmann.

Consequently, Herrmann fails to teach or suggest stopper retaining portions engaging a retaining side of the plate-like portion along a plane perpendicular to the direction of insertion of the optical fiber cord, and thus does not anticipate the subject matter of Applicant's claim 1, because the latching hooks 14 on the second limb 13 of Herrmann engage with the latching lugs 16 along interfaces whose cross-sections are parallel to the direction of insertion of the fiber optic cable 6, rather than a cross-section that is perpendicular to the direction of insertion of the optical fiber cord, as recited in claim 1. These arguments also extend to Applicant's claims 2-4 by their dependency from claim 1.

In addition, each blade portion in Applicant's claim penetrates into the covering portion of the fiber optic cable, and the stopper retaining portions hold each plate-like portion in position in the stopper, as recited in claim 1. By disclosing limbs 11 and 13 oriented perpendicular to one another, with neither limb reinforcing the other, Herrmann teaches away from the advantages presented in Applicant's claims.

Further, Herrmann discloses that the opening 9 is designed so that axial displacement of the first limb 11 is possible. See col. 3, lines 16-20 of Herrmann. Such axial displacement in Herrmann would impose additional shear stresses on the optical waveguide 8 with the removal of sheath material due to an axial shift of the first limb 11 while penetrating insulating sheath 7. Thus, Herrmann precludes forcing a portion of the covering portion away, as recited in Applicant's claim 1, and hence teaches away from the features of Applicant's claims.

With respect to the dependent claims, Herrmann lacks a stopper including, *inter alia*, a pair of plate-like portions interconnected by an interconnecting piece portion, as recited in claim 2. Also, Herrmann does not teach or suggest that the distal end edge of the plate-like portion is tapering in a direction of insertion, as recited in Applicant's claim 4. Thus, Herrmann fails to anticipate the features recited in Applicant's dependent claims.

With regard to claim 5, Morgan does not compensate for the deficiencies of Herrmann, but instead discloses a double cutting edge saw blade for reciprocating power saws, and is completely unrelated to fiber optic connections. "In order to rely on a reference as a basis for rejection..., the reference must either be in the field of applicant's endeavor or ... be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the inventor was concerned." See *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 1446, 24 USPQ2d 1443, 1445 (Fed. Cir. 1992) and MPEP §2141.01(a).


By disclosing a saw blade, Morgan demonstrates no suggestion for reverse blades that project from the opposed side edges of the positioning slit, as recited in Applicant's claim 5, and with the side edges of the positioning slit positioning the fiber optic cable in a fixed manner, as recited in Applicant's claim 1 from which claim 5 depends. Applicant submits that Morgan represents nonanalogous art in the context of a person of ordinary skill, and that the Office Action lacks even superficial rationale for combining the applied references. Thus, Morgan does not qualify as prior art for purposes of a rejection under §103.

For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully asserts that the independent claim is now patentable over the applied reference. The dependent claims are likewise patentable over the applied references for at least the reasons discussed as well as for the additional features they recite. Consequently, all the claims are in condition for allowance. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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JAO:GWT/gwt

Attachments:
Appendix
Request for Approval of Drawing Corrections

Date: November 21, 2002

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<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
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APPENDIX

Changes to the Specification:

The following is a marked-up copy of the amended paragraph:

Page 9, lines 15-20:

A mounting hole 13 of a generally square shape is formed in a bottom portion of the housing ~~11~~ 10, and plate-like portions 41 (described later) of the stopper 40 can be inserted into the cord receiving hole portion 11c through this mounting hole 13 in a direction perpendicular to the direction of insertion of the optical fiber cord 90 (see Figs. 2 and 4).

Changes to Claims:

The following is a marked-up version of the amended claim:

1. (Amended) An optical connector comprising:

a housing having a cord receiving hole portion in which an optical fiber cord can be inserted and received along an axis of said optical fiber cord; and

a stopper including a plate-like portion having a positioning slit having a width slightly smaller than a diameter of said optical fiber cord;

_____ wherein a mounting hole, through which said plate-like portion of said stopper can be inserted into said cord receiving hole portion in a direction perpendicular to a direction of insertion of said optical fiber cord, is formed in said housing, and said housing has stopper retaining portions for holding said plate-like portion of said stopper ~~in~~, said stopper retaining portions engaging a retaining side of said plate-like portion having a posture cross-section perpendicular to the direction of insertion of said optical fiber cord; and

_____ wherein when said stopper is inserted into said cord receiving hole portion, each of blade portions, formed by a side edge of said positioning slit and a distal end edge of said plate-like portion disposed perpendicular to said side edge, penetrates into a covering portion of said optical fiber in a direction different from a direction toward an axis of said

optical fiber cord, while forcing a portion of said covering portion away, thereby positioning said optical fiber cord in a fixed manner in the direction of the axis of said optical fiber cord.